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Prevention of armed conflict: strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution

Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Letter dated 1 August 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

At its 105th plenary meeting, held on 31 July 2014, the General Assembly adopted its resolution 68/303, entitled "Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution". Taking this opportunity, I would like to convey our appreciation to the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Turkey and their teams for their leadership and skilful efforts, which enabled parties to reach agreement on and to succeed in garnering overwhelming support for this important resolution. Azerbaijan is pleased to be one of its co-sponsors.

At its sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth sessions, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions on the topic (resolutions 65/283 of 22 June 2011 and 66/291 of 13 September 2012) and the Secretary-General submitted a report, which contains the Guidance for Effective Mediation (A/66/811). Azerbaijan considers the unanimous adoption in 2011 of resolution 65/283 and the subsequent process as an essential effort towards providing the existing and future mediation mechanisms with useful guidance.

Azerbaijan's contribution to reinforcing the promotion of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution has manifested, inter alia, in initiating a series of discussions on the topic. Thus, during its presidency of the Security Council in May 2012, Azerbaijan organized an

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Arria-formula meeting of the Security Council to encourage a frank exchange of views on the role of mediation, judicial settlement and justice in promoting durable peace and reconciliation.

As part of its presidency of the Security Council in October 2013, Azerbaijan convened a high-level meeting on strengthening the partnership synergy between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). In its presidential statement S/PRST/2013/16, adopted as an outcome of the meeting, the Security Council, inter alia, recognized and further encouraged the active contribution of OIC to the work of the United Nations and noted that the two organizations share common objectives in fostering solutions to some specific issues of concern and other conflicts in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

In recent years, important progress has been achieved in enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and regional partners across a full range of areas, including the maintenance of international peace and security, the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution. Indeed, in a number of instances, the relevant regional organizations have proved to be indispensable mechanisms for promoting international and regional peace, security and cooperation, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

At the same time, serious challenges remain. While regional organizations are normally well-positioned to understand the causes of armed conflicts, owing to their knowledge of the region, it is obvious that not all of them can boast the ability, political will and institutional capacity to ensure compliance by Member States with their statutory commitments.

First and foremost, it is crucial that all Member States adhere to their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. As a matter of priority, special attention should be given to the implementation of resolutions adopted by the principal organs of the United Nations, in particular those relating to the settlement of conflicts. In that regard, we consider it essential that, in resolutions 65/283 and 68/303, the General Assembly recalled all such resolutions related to the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution, including through mediation. Such a reference obviously includes some unresolved protracted conflicts, which were addressed earlier by the General Assembly and the Security Council, in particular those pertaining to the illegal use of force and foreign occupation.

In that context, we welcome the reaffirmation in the resolution of the commitment to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States, as well as the explicit reference to the right of self-determination of peoples which remain under colonial domination or foreign occupation.

This approach ensures that no peace settlement is reached that is inconsistent with international law and provides guidance not only for the parties to the conflict but also for the international community as a whole and, when appropriate, mediation efforts undertaken at the regional and subregional levels.

As a country that is itself suffering from prolonged military occupation by the Republic of Armenia and the resultant large-scale ethnic cleansing of a significant

part of its territory, Azerbaijan strongly supports such an approach in addressing protracted conflicts and their military, humanitarian and human rights consequences. Against this background, the statement made by the delegation of Armenia at the plenary meeting on 31 July 2014 to disassociate itself from the consensus on resolution 68/303 is yet more evidence of that Member State's isolationist policy, disregard for international law and unwillingness to engage constructively in the ongoing conflict settlement process.

We look forward to further initiatives on the topic with the view of contributing to developing and implementing comprehensive peace strategies within particular frameworks, providing that dispute settlement and conflict resolution are based on respect for international law, the rule of law and for justice. Azerbaijan will continue to be an active partner in that process.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 33 (b), 34 and 38, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yashar **Aliyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative